2: Kroeber E-5 (1930)1931 NU31 Seri NU31

114 Davis has had fuller opportunity to investigate, but confined my
121 attention to the social and religious sides of their life. There was the more reason for this since it is in dealing with these latter aspects, where verbal communications are as important as observation, that McGee's monograph is most tenuous and dubious. I also secured linguistic notes for the preliminary placing of the curious tonal speech of the Seri.

178 Seri culture in its present form is a fragmentary thing such as
182 could hardly have existed under purely native conditions. Religion especially has suffered, no doubt under Christian influence, without many elements of Christianity having been taken over in exchange. Of mythology, only tatters seem to remain; of ritual, little more; only shamanism seems to be fairly well preserved. Nor, beyond the Spanish names for God and the cross, do the Seri give evidence of being or having been Catholics. The result is that they seem remarkably religionless. I do not know of a native people that appears so free from superstition and so unspiritual in its attitudes. Possibly I conferred with the wrong informants; but those I talked with seemed unsecretive. Social culture is better preserved, as is evident from a set of kinship terms that are numerous, precise, and untouched by Spanish concepts. On the other hand, there is little formal social organization. Whether this is also the result of a loss, is hard to say. The Seri may never have had sibs or clans; but the fact that they appear to lack them now is no positive evidence that they were without them three centuries ago. Shifts of residence, contraction of territory, shrinkage of numbers, amalgamation of distinct bands, may well have obliterated much of such social fabric as they once possessed. Games and the calendar are wholly native and intact, but taboos connected with sex, age, food, and the like seem fewer than among the backward tribes of the southwestern United States. It seems reasonable to construe this condition as the result of varyingly hostile, parasitic, and missionizing Spanish-Mexican contacts; especially when one realizes how overwhelmingly, though also spottily, this influence has affected the other tribes of Sonora—the Yaqui, Mayo, Pima, and Opata.

101 Historically the Seri are not a tribe but the consolidated rem-
131 nant of a series of dialectically distinct tribes that once held the barren coast of Sonora from Guaymas to Puerto Libertad. Tiburon
174 Island is the stronghold in which the mixed survivors, probably now numbering less than 200, have taken refuge, and, owing to its inaccessibility, drought, and poverty, have succeeded in maintaining themselves and their blended and reduced culture. Toward the interior, it is doubtful if they ranged beyond the present line of the Southern Pacific railroad, if that far. Orozco y Berra indeed assigns them territory up the Sonora River to Ures, on his famous map, which is still basic to all other ethnic maps of Mexico. But from Hermosillo

3:Davis & Dawson E-5 (1922-1940) 1945
NU31 Seri NU31

114
648 their midst and to live among them without undue fear of losing his life. Through the kindness of Señor Thomson the senior author succeeded in making himself a friend of the [123] Seri and, enlarging upon this friendship through long periods of living and traveling among them, has acquired an intimate knowledge of these strange people.

105
178 In 1922 the fishing industry of the Gulf of California was not yet well developed, and it was to be ten years before the village of Kino should appear on the maps of the Sonora coast. The Seris were still isolated in their desert domain and their numbers, then about [161] 250, were maintaining themselves out of reach of the infectious diseases of the white man. The clan life had disappeared, and the people lived as a single tribe with their old chief, Juan Tomas, 90 years old at that time

[291]
[481]
[482]
[415]

FIG. 15. MOVING DAY AMONG THE SERIS
THESE BURDENS, BORNE FOR MANY MILES OVER ROCKS, THROUGH CACTUS AND DEEP SAND, CONTAIN UTENSILS FOR HOUSEKEEPING WHEREVER THE SERIS MAY STOP.

[p.263(B)]

105
178 and a veteran of nearly a century of warfare against the soldiers of Sonora. The turtle remained their most important source of food, and the pitahaya harvest the most enjoyed. The crafts of their old culture were largely gone, however. Hoop-iron had come in for many uses: harpoon points, scrapers, and knives. The bow and arrow had been almost entirely supplanted by rifles of which the tribe possessed more than thirty. The handmade olla was fast disappearing in favor of the five-gallon tin can, and water
[482] carrying, now much done by the males, was accomplished by means of a palanca, borne on the heavily calloused shoulder, to which a can was suspended from each end.

It seemed that the balsa building art was
178 encountered barely as it passed into extinction, for the last balsa known to have been
396 made by the Seris was found in use near Kino, in 1922. This rare prize was immedi-
[126] ately bargained for and in exchange it was agreed that the tribesman should have lumber to build a boat large enough for all the people of his family. A few months later the finished craft, caulked with a "pitch" made

[p. 264(A)]

S.Davis & Dawson E-S (1922-1940) 1965
HU21 Seri HU21

178 396 of sea lion oil and powdered cactus skeleton, was launched. It was the largest craft they had ever possessed and came to be called the "battleship," for its size.

114 221 After having established firm friendship with the tribe in 1922, it was possible two years later to carry out an extensive plan to learn the habits of the Seris by living among them, sharing their comradeship along with their privations. At this time they still had no homes that could even be called semi-permanent. Moving here and there in response to fluctuations of their precarious food supply, household things were not accumulated, and life continued to be reduced to its very simplest elements and absolute necessities. Baskets made of fiber from the torote tree, some tin cooking and water vessels [415] (the handmade olla was seldom any longer made), some patched and filthy rags which served as blankets to the fortunate few, constituted the family possessions (Fig. 15). Starved, bony family dogs were abundant, as always, every Indian having one or 231 two (Fig. 16). Each day they could be seen gnawing on some old fish head long since

[p. 264 (B)]
[Text continues on p. 265(N)]

7: Marroquin E-5 (1955) 1957 NU31 Seri NU31

In general, the Seris have a healthy appearance; the most frequent complaints are gastro-intestinal and visual defects due to avitaminosis. It is very possible that given the difficult living conditions resulting from the desert environment, a rigorous selective process among the newborn takes place so that only those who possess exceptional physical qualities survive. This explains why the majority of them retain the physical characteristics described by Hardy more than a century ago: "the Indians of Isla Tiburón are tall, healthy and well built".

In spite of attempts at education, the Seris do not practice the elemental rules of hygiene; their way of life, neglecting this aspect, contributes to increase the unhealthy foci which exist in the places where they have established themselves.

Dwellings.—The Seris retain many vestiges of their nomadic life, among them the hut which serves as their living quarters; many of them are simple provisional arrangements for sheltering themselves from wind and sun, and they bear no relationship to the stability and durability of our dwellings. The Seri hut was made to meet the necessities of a nomadic people who had no reason to spend much time nor work on making a dwelling which would only be used for a season (one, two or at the most three months). Nevertheless, some innovations have been introduced in the last 20 years, so that we must distinguish between two types of houses. The primitive model consists of a series of scrub pine arches interwoven with branches from the same shrub almost totally covered by foliage, tortoise shells, *zacate*, etc., with only a small hole in one of its ends as an entrance (this type of hut is the same that McGee saw in 1894 when the Seris still led a nomadic life).

In the new model more resistent woods are used, like *sahueso*, *torote*, etc., and poles, between which is laid a layer mud. The house is rectangular, without windows; with only one entrance, but always larger than the entrance to the brush hut. Other models would have to be added to these two, due to the incorporation and utilization of tents made in the United States which some U. S. tourists or the Society of Friends have given them. The tent is used as permanent living quarters; or sometimes combined with branches to cover the primitive type huts.

Domestic Animals.—The Seris are very fond of domestic animals like the dog, cat, and finally, the chicken. For all practical purposes these animals live together with the family; they rest on the piles of rags and sand which serve the Indians as beds; lick the plates and cooking utensils; dirty the house; increase the household fauna with their fleas and other vermin thus contributing to create and unhealthy atmosphere in the home.

Problems of Intoxication.—Their dealings with the fish buyers, in whose stores are sold beer, mezcal and tequila, has turned them to the consumption of these drinks. The Seri drinks liquor in an uncontrolled

7: Marroquin E-5 (1955) 1957 NU31 Seri NU31

with this problem is the lack of legal title to the lands which the Seris own in fact but which legally belong to the nation.

Insofar as the economic problem, it is necessary to better the fishing techniques, doing away with old process of obtaining the catch through dynamite explosions. Finally, as Dr. Marroquín says, the fact should be noted that the Seris on passing from the nomadic economy to exchange economy lack the necessary knowledge to achieve success in their operations within the national and international market.

It is thus necessary to take care of these and other problems, to save this Indian group from complete extinction, succeeding on the other hand in raising their living conditions, making of them citizens capable of contributing to the progress of the State of Sonora and the Republic of Mexico as a whole.

NEW DIRECTOR OF THE SUMMER INSTITUTE OF LINGUISTICS IN MEXICO

For the next two years the Director of the Summer Institute of Linguistics in Mexico will be Dr. Benjamin Elson. Dr. Elson first came to Mexico in 1942 and began linguistic field work among the Sierra Popoluca Indians of the State of Veracruz. Sierra Popoluca has been the principal object of his linguistic studies since that time, and various articles have resulted from these researches. He took his degree from Cornell University with the thesis "Sierra Popoluca Morphology". He has on other occasions served as Associate Director of the Institute in Mexico.

The Associate Director will be Mr. H. J. Klassen. Mr. Klassen has done linguistic field work on Lowland Mixteco in the State of Oaxaca. He has served as Interim Director of the Institute on previous occasions.

VII ROUND TABLE OF ANTHROPOLOGY HELD IN THE CITY OF OAXACA FROM SEPTEMBER 1ST. TO 7TH.

During the month of September, the VII Round Table of Anthropology, dedicated to the study of the Indian cultures of Oaxaca, was held in the city of Oaxaca, capital of the state of the same name. Since at the present time there exists in this state a large proportion of Indians, and since during its pre-Hispanic past such important cultures as the Zapotec and Mixtec flourished there, the interest of this Round Table is evident.

Lack of space makes it impossible to present here a complete report of this anthropological meeting: therefore, we will limit our coverage to a summary of the most important points, taken from the Report of the recording secretary, Prof. Wigberto Jiménez Moreno. This report was made available to us through the kindness of Mrs. Carmen Cook de Leonard, Vice-President of the Center of Anthropological Investigations of Mexico. The complete version in English may be seen in the *Boletín* of the Center of Anthropological Investigations (Nº 4, Oct., 1957, pp. 43-49).

I have no idea, of course, what the diet may have been in the past since only archaeology can suggest the answer. But I am sure that there has been much change in their diet since Kroeber saw them, not in the basic pattern but in the composition. With the introduction of hook and line fishing, the percentages swung in favor of fish, while decimation of the marine turtle cut down the importance of this animal. Simultaneously, the Seris now have available manufactured or imported Mexican food items: flour, sugar, rice, potato (when no one is looking; potatoes are not supposed to be sold to them because they make *tepache* from them which makes them grossly fish in cans, coffee and tea. Dependence on the products of the desert has dwindled. Rattlesnakes, desert turtles and chuckawalla still find their way to the Seri kitchen but not too frequently. Pelican and sea gull will be eaten only when rough times beset them but are disdainfully refused at other times. My own estimates, impressions not supported by any attempt to measure their diet, are as follows:

fish	50+%
turtle	8-
Mexican import	20
desert plant	7
desert land animals incl. stock	5
shellfish	10
total marine origin	68+
total desert origin	12
imported origin	20

Another important change in the pattern is the unquestionable decrease of hunting (other than marine animals) in Seri life, as of the domestic stock stealing, the place of which has been taken in a way by the dependence on manufactured foods and items. Hunting nowadays is done rarely and only few individuals will devote some months out of the year to it. Stealing of domestic stock has ceased for practical purposes, since in the past it lead to virtual extermination of these Indians. Occasionally the Seri kill off a semi-wild burro, herds of which run about loose in the desert or they'll get leavings off one, hunted down by a Mexican trader or fishermen.

The Seris' basic tools of game procurement have changed. Bow and arrow were still much in evidence and in use in McGee's time but seem to have gone out soon after. Kroeber did not mention them and by now they are quite extinct, except as clumsy toys little boys use to play with. The throwing stick is still used on rabbits—any stick one can scrounge on a moment's notice will do for the purpose. If any traps or falls had been used we do not know of them. Accidental stones may be used much in the same way as throwing sticks. In general, various sorts of fire arms, mostly .22 and .38 caliber are owned by a good many Seri men and have replaced other weapons in the terrestrial hunt.

More important are changes in the fishing procedures. Formerly spear and detachable harpoon were their only marine weapons. Even as late as 1930, during Kroeber's visit, the Seris made no use of hook and line. But now, hook and line of

[P. 7A]

apparently a line of type has been omitted here-Analyst]

462 desert plants or littoral fishlets from tide-pools or of the shellfish. Both men and women will [224] bring in an occasional rattler, although women are more likely to do this because they spend more [857] time in the desert. Children of both sexes are engaged in the female occupations here, but ado- [883] lescent boys already join in their fathers' hunts on land or sea.

342 Housing has undergone some changes. In the 184 desert or on Tiburon the Indians construct the kind of shelter they did in the recorded past, an ocotillo frame, bent over in the middle and covered up with dried plant debris and twigs from the desert, or with the sail cloth. But in Desemboque they have more substantial houses— of wattle and adobe, with flat roofs, rectangular or square, often with corrugated tin or drift planks and other debris piled up on top, or along the walls.

●178 In the remainder of their material culture, not much has been left from years past although one must remember that from the very beginning of recorded Serian history it has been of a most [291] meager sort. Pelican robes, which some Seris ap- [412] parently still wore in 1930 are gone for good. So are the stone tools. So is the pottery which had [323] probably disappeared in Kroeber's time. The hu- [301] man hair necklace with rattlesnake rattles is also a thing of the past. The rattlesnake skin belts [291] McGee (1898:170) described and figured are probably all gone. I havn't seen or heard of any.

412 But what remains much as they had been in 285 1894 are the bone-awls. These are made of burros' carpals and the blossoming of basketry, owing to

[P. 8A]

9:Malkin E-5 (1953-1955)1962 MU31 Seri MU31

III

MAMMALS

262 water for a week until it escaped. There was
[231] no intent to do away with it and serve it up for dinner later on.

The 3 species reported as eaten in the past are kangaroo rat, sea lion and the ringtail cat or
[252] cácomistle. Of these the little rodent had been supposedly "boiled in hot water with salt" which
[261] method of preparation may indicate that it happens quite recently yet. It is quite possible that in times of famine this animal is still used. The sea
[432] lion has been reported as "eaten once a long time ago. All of it. But not now. Its hide was once sold
[114] also but now it isn't used at all." This conflicts with McGee's statement (McGee, 189:202) that there was a taboo on eating sea lions among the Seris and there is no way to reconcile the information.

[114] McGee's report may be as truthful as are the uncertain and hazy comments of the present day Indians.

224 On the other hand, the cougar belongs to a very dubious category, unless we can rely on Miguel Barnett's memory. All 4 of the younger informants emphatically deny that the cougar has ever been hunted for meat. But Miguel Barnett claimed that this has been done in the past, although he could not tell how long ago. Kroeber says nothing about this animal and this makes it difficult to date the events. At the time of Kroeber's visit, Miguel was at least 25 years old and the cougar could have been hunted either
[262] then or earlier. But today the Seris do not eat the flesh of the big cat and their abhorrence of it has been confirmed by the Mexicans to whom I talked about the subject, and who relish cougars' meat.
[178] This apparent distaste for the *el tigre's* flesh may well be a recent development quite unconnected with the lack of weapons. McGee (1894: *loc. cit.*) casually mentions that the Seris hunt both cougars
[411] and the jaguars but cites no evidence for it. Yet
[177] in his time Seris' almost only weapons were the bow and arrow and a lance which today has been replaced by firearms. I am unable to explain this contradictory behaviour.

262 Finally, there is the Ringtail cat or cácomistle. Although this beast has been reported as part of the diet, the information isn't too reliable. I had
[124] no way of checking whether this was the animal the Indians had in mind. Their description of it seemed to answer some other unspecified animal and their answers were confused. The fact is that the Ringtail cat does occur in the Seri territory and they are supely familiar with it.

Of the remaining 11 species none were ever mentioned by any of the informants as having been ever eaten. Their denial of eating the coyotes were most vehement. Coyote figures out probably

9:Malkin E-5 (1953-1955)1962 NU31 Seri NU31

Coyote figures out probably

as an important and perhaps disreputable figure in the mythology although nothing but scraps and bits of information suggest this. It is possible that there is actually a taboo on eating this animal or perhaps it is so disreputable that eating its flesh would put a gourmant in an inferior position.

How important is the Seri mammalian diet is hard to tell. It certainly looms more heavily during the winter, because in the cool season hunting is easier than during the heat of the summer and in fact this is when most of it is done by the ardent hunters. Too, winter subjects the Seris to greater hazards and is apt to increase their dependence on the desert resources over that during the summer, even if these resources are scantier at that time.

To all of these animals one should add the semi-wild burros running about the extensive Mexican rancherias. The Indians poach on them frequently using their fire arms, usually the .22 caliber rifles. In any case, it appears that during the summer when the field work was carried out, the mammalian diet figures quite lightly on the Seri table.

Food preparation: Very little is done in the preparation of the mammalian meat. All that I could observe was the boiling of it in hot water spiced with salt. The Indians were saying that in order to have the meat of a peccary, deer or bighorn ready to eat one must boil it 2-3 hours. The same procedure is followed with the meat of the burros. In contrast to this, as shall be seen later, fish are boiled as well as roasted while the turtles are also dried and salted. Preparation of meat is done by women, certainly at least in the encampments when they are present.

Food preferences: Some of the Seri food preferences have already been mentioned. At the top of the list as the desirables are the peccary, the deer, the bighorn and the blacktail jackrabbit; at the bottom is the badger, whose meat "is not much good." There is also preference by sex. Females of both the bighorn and peccary are preferred over the males "because they do not have the bad odor like the males." This sort of favoritism also occurs among the Mexicans. However, the Indians did not elaborate beyond this point.

Other economic uses: Apart from meat, hides are also used. The hides of the deer, bighorn and peccary had been used for sleeping mats although this matter has been expressed in the past tense. Miguel Barnett also suggested that the bighorn hides had been used for clothing by the Indians in the past—but he neglected to say how long ago. During Kroeber's stays, no Seris went about in the animal or bird (pelican) skins but earlier when McGee visited them they went about in these simple garments. Judging then by Miguel's memory, the use of the bighorn hide for clothing must be pushed back to the period of World War I or even earlier.[1]

[1] Miguel Barnett indicated that the "fur" of the bighorn had once been worn for the cold season "but not now."

[P 10 A]

9:Malkin E-5 (1955-1956)1962 NU31 Seri NU31

V

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

136 fore it was impossible to check the Seris' ability
* [825] to distinguish between these.

As for the marine turtles, there are several possible species in the area. There is no mistake about the loggerhead. I have seen one carapace and bones taken at Campo Vivora, while with the Seris. The others could be any two of the several species common in the Gulf.

Economic Uses

* 825 In 1956 I published data concerning economic
114 exploitation of the reptiles by the Seris which need correction. Eleven species out of 25 had been reported as used economically. Additional work done in 1955 and after the completion of the MS. indicated a much higher percentage: 17 species out of 26 are used. Thus the percentage increases from 44% to 65%. The percentage of the species actually used will probably rise with additional
[262] field work because some of the informants are dis-
[124] inclined to admit eating certain animals or will simply say, "these had been eaten in the past but not now." However, close inspection and observation often contradict these statements.

262 The list of species reported as eaten is as follows:

Turtles and tortoises: all species
Snakes: both racers, patch nosed snake and both rattlesnakes
Lizards: both chuckawallas, Gila monster, race runner, northern crested lizard

This listing shows how much dependent are the Seris on the desert habitat for food. Even today, with all the available ready-made manufactured
[178] food or imported food from the *tienda*, they gather evidently most of the common reptiles to increase their menu.

Of the species in the list, only two, both smaller species of sea turtles, figure as really important items. McGee believed that here was by far the most important part of the Seri menu, with the marine birds running second.[1] Now, the importance of the sea turtles has declined, no doubt through a variety of outside influences. I doubt (on the basis of my observation) if altogether it comes to more than 10% of their total diet. The turtles had been replaced as number one food by
[177] the fish (with the introduction of hook and line fishing). But anther factor evidently is the depletion of the turtle population. The third species, the huge loggerhead, is so rare that during the entire
[225] summer of 1953, only one of them had been harpooned and that at Camp Vivora away from Desemboque. The two smaller species have also become very rare and hardly ever show up near the village. They can be taken on more distant expedi-

[1]Eggs of the turtles are considered a delicacy, especially of the smaller of the two. The Seris say that the loggerhead has been eaten once but now almost never, because it became so rare.

[P.22 B]

262 them to their shelter and held them there for several days before they and their families finally ate them up. The turtles are also a well-liked item.

As already indicated in some instances there exists preference for a particular part of an animal. Of the Gila monster only the fat tail was said to have been eaten, and of both rattlers, the head and the tail are discarded on the grounds
* [825] that they contain toxin. Finally the toad and the gecko and *Xanthusia* are all rejected as completely venomous.

● 178 262 It is also evident that changes in the Seri taste have occured in the course of the past several decades. Some animals are on their way out as food, and here we have the Gila monster, the whipcoach, the red racer and smaller lizards. In several cases, and this includes the Gila monster, the responses indicated that the animal had been eaten in the past. I also observed that on the sly, the Seris would eat them when other food was in short order. But they are reluctant to admit this and often altogether denied it.

Hunting

224 [225] Most reptiles are captured by hand or else killed with a stick, stone or pea-shooter. Except for the turtles, the Seris will not make special expeditions. But it is certain that if they find themselves on any of the islands near the shores of Baja California they will go ashore deliberately in search of the chuckawalla.

225 The turtles are another matter. Here now, just as in the past, special expeditions are made in order to get them. These expeditions take place
[501] nowadays in the usual flat-bottomed plank boats, either motor or oar propelled. The hunt takes place only during unusually quiet and dark nights, when the Gulf is smooth and calm and there is neither wind nor ripple. With the slightest disturbance,
[354] [411] turtle fishing is impossible. It is all done with the torch lights or Coleman lanterns. The principal and only weapon is the harpoon, identical with that described and illustrated by McGee. The turtles are then harpooned, dragged into the boat and either left alive, when the hunters have a sale of live ones in mind, or pounded to death with a
[251] club or oar, quartered and then either consumed on the spot or else dried and salted."

[224] [462] While the collecting of the smaller animals usually falls to the children or women, turtle hunting is men's job. Men, too, usually get the chuckawalla because they usually visit more distant islands.

Pets

231 None of the reptiles are pets in a real sense. Those few that might be kept are only held until the day when they are butchered and eaten. It is motivated more by the wish to preserve fresh food than by any affection for the animal. The turtles, the tortoises and the chuckawalla belong here. Occasionally a Seri boy will string a lizard, a *Sceloporus*

"The loggerhead is hunted in the daytime because, owing to its great strength, night hunt would be too dangerous. Two harpoons are always used on it, while for the smaller species, one harpoon usually suffices.

9:Malkin E-5 (1953-1955)1962 NU31 Seri NU31

262 en simply because their flesh is disliked and unfit for human consumption. But it may also well be that some of them, especially of the giant variety, are not eaten simply because they are far too large to tackle and the Seris fear hunting them.

The Seris indicated also in some cases that larger specimens of fishes are eaten when they reach the size which would justify the effort. This is true of *Malacoctenus zonifer* which they indicated is "eaten when large," that is when at least 10 cm. long.

[226] Although only sometimes did the Seris specifically indicate that certain fishes are used for bait, it is very likely that almost all small or lesser fishes are so used.

262 In some cases the Indians indicated changes in preference for given fishes, with the time. For
● 178 unexplained reason *Gymnothorax castaneus*, the morene, has been claimed to have been eaten in the past but not for the last 11 years. It isn't clear why the figure of 11 had been used and why suddenly in the early 40's they should stop eating it while the Mexican drool over it. But it may be also that here we have merely personal preference of the informants, as so often happens. As for the *pescara* it was formerly taken for food
[439] but now it is merely sold to the Mexicans. This practice is increasing also to include the immense *meros*, even larger than the *pescara*. The fish is mainly sold but rarely eaten by the Seris themselves.

Food Preparation and Preferences

252 Food preparation is simple and in the main differs not at all from the preparation of other animal diet. The fish are either boiled whole or in part or else are roasted over slow fire on a grill. The entrails are usually discarded, but otherwise the beasts are eaten entire, eyes, brains and the rest, while the tiny fishlets are eaten complete with the scales and guts.

262 As for the preferences, as expected, there are some fishes that the Seri like better than others. The *bana* in the first place and the *pinto* in the second lead the list. The Seri prefer them to all others and consider them a real delicacy. On the other hand, there are some fishes that they'll eat only under protest, meaning when times are hard. *Girella simplicidens* is one such creature. The *Puerco* or *Cochi* is another. I have seen boat loads of puercos brought in with the other fish and un-
[231] ceremoniously dumped out on the beach to the dogs. Literally! The Seris took to this fish only when fishing was poor during the wintry days
[183] when they were held ashore by the weather. Even then, they tried to eat the despised creatures on the sly, avoiding being seen doing this, and when I or the Mexicans picked up fresh fish from the beach to take home they laughed saying that we acted as a *cochi* (pig) would!

Other Economic Uses

* 825 One use made of fish concerns two species of
237 sharks, the *chato* and *camposo*. Here, the inform-
322 ants claimed, the oil from their liver had been used in earlier times for polishing wood. This is

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9tMalkin E-5 (1953-1955)1962 NU31 Seri NU31

MOLLUSCA

VII

Species	USES: Food Prep.	Food Past	Decoration Prep.	Decoration Past	Trade Prep.	Trade Past	Bait
Octopus bimaculatus	x	x				x	x
Codakia distinguenda		x					
Laviecardium elatum		x			x[1]		
Carditamera affinis	x	x					
Acmaea dalliana			x	x	x		
Crucibulum spinosum		x	x	x	x		
Chione undatella	x	x					
Chione californiensis	x	x					
Pteria peruviana	x	?	x	?	x		
Volsella capax	x	x					
Olivella dama			x	x	x		
Cypraea annettae				x[2]			
Tegula rugosa		x		x		x	
Conus regularis		x[3]		x	x	?	
Phyllonotus erythrostomus		x				x	
Turritella bradeifiana		x[3]			x	?	
Polinices reclusiana	x	x					
Chlamys subnudosa	x	?					
Atrina maura	x	?			x[4]		
Navicula pacifica		x					
Turbo fluctuosa	x	?			x		
Solenosteira pallida			x	?	x		
Ceritium stercusmuscarum			x				
Trivia radians			x				
Ficus ventricosus	x						
Niacke bistrinosa	x	x					

[1] Occasionally used as dip spoon

[2] Supposedly used in the past for money

[3] In the past "giants of 300-400 maybe years ago have eaten it."

[4] Only pearls

These figures show then 26 out of 37 species exploited economically in some way, that is 70%. These figures show increase over the figures I have published previously (1956) which were 21 out of 36 species and 58% respectively. The corrected figures are the result of brief additional field work in 1955.

Food

A good part of the molluscan forms are used as food. Altogether 19 species are listed as such, although out of these, only 11 were reported as being part of the diet today while the remainder only in the past. It is obvious that there has been progressive decrease in the Seris' dependence on the molluscan diet within the past few generations.

Four of the species reported as part of the Seri diet at various times had been collected from the kitchen-middens. There are: *Pteria peruviana*, *Chlamys subdudosa*, *Volsella capax*, and *Navicula pacifica*. Of these four, *Navicula* has been reported as eaten in the past "maybe 100 years ago, but not

9:Malkin E-5 (1953-1955)1962 NU31 Seri NU31

XI

SUMMARY

224 Hunting is very decidedly secondary to fishing, although it is still much practiced by certain individuals and in a desultory way probably by all.

462 There is a clean cut division of labor in all these occupations. Fishing and hunting are men's occupations, gathering of the desert animals and beachcombing for the intertidal animals is largely the job of women and children. Boys get broken [868] into men's occupations in adolescence, girls into women's jobs very much earlier.

224 Avoidance of fishing or hunting certain creatures appears much more a matter of custom than of well defined and socially rationalized attitude. Frequently an animal is not hunted simply because the Seri feel it is too big and too strong for them to tackle.

157 Through all these activities, Seri individualism is curiously woven and accounts for the failure of anything that might resemble a collective effort.

Food Preferences and Preparation

252 Seri food is prepared in a simplest sort of way. [263] Boiling in water is usual with salt and sometimes a few other spices added. While most food is prepared that way, snakes and fishes are usually fried, without any ingredients. There has been a [178] notable shift toward greater fanciness in the ingredients, as they have become more readily available.

262 There are many preferences. Animals are scaled in desirability. Some fishes, marine turtles, chuckawalla, deer and peccary and duck are at the top of the list; lower animals, smaller fishes including puerco in the middle, while the sea gull and the pelican are probably at the very bottom of the pit. This again reflects temporal changes in tastes [178] although not necessarily a direct influence from the Mexicans.

Pets

231 Few pets are kept, other than dogs. Such animals as come are those captured accidentally. In most cases they are bird nestlings.

Taxonomy

* 825 Differential criteria are applied in the classification of different groups. There is less tendency to group birds than to group different mammals and classificatory ideas break down almost completely in smaller animals, especially insects and molluscs. Considering the economic importance of the molluscs, poor ability to distinguish the Gastropods from the Pelecypods is striking.

The classificatory criteria differ for different groups. Mammals are generally recognized by the furiness, birds by the ability to fly and the pres-

[P.54 B]

9:Malkin E-5 (1953-1955)1982 NU31 Seri NU31

*825 or toxic contrary to their genuine nature. When such contrasts exist, the beliefs cannot always be explained as a matter of the influence from the Mexican folklore. The reasons for this I discussed in the chapter on the reptiles and amphibians. The explanation for such beliefs depends mostly on additional field work. It is also interesting that in some of these instances (bat for example) there is a suggestion that the belief in the toxicity or other unpleasant traits not only is not associated with the Mexican folklore but is basically aboriginal, and it is on the way out among the younger men.

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Attitudes

*825 182 With rare exceptions Seri attitudes toward animals are remarkably sober, pragmatic and matter of fact. This is evident in how little folklore or irrational fear is connected with the animals. It all runs pretty much along the line of their generalized attitudes, world view and religion as suggested by other investigators (Kroeber 1930:4; This is also the opinion of Spicer, personal communication). Elements of mystery are almost completely absent and this is probably not entirely due to the disintegration of their religion and culture as Kroeber (*Ibid*) thinks.

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*825 171 In other ways, their attitude toward animals ranges from indifference (adults) to downright deliberate cruelty (little boys). In this, the Seri boys differ markedly from the boys of some of the other groups I studied (Malkin 1958:89).

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11: Moser L-5 (1956-1961) 1963
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SERI BANDS

EDWARD MOSER

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ABSTRACT

In previous publications on the Seri, frequent reference to distinct Seri groups points to historical tribal divisions at some level. Recent research among the Seri has determined the former existence of six bands which included three dialect groups. Three of the bands were subdivided into clans. These six bands, whose formation may have been caused largely by internal struggles, were eventually crushed and reduced to a single group by the devastation brought about by external conflict.

INTRODUCTION

The Seri tribe is located in Mexico along the coast of Sonora between Bahia Kino and Puerto Libertad, and on Tiburon Island (Fig. 1). Today it consists of approximately two hundred and eighty persons who call themselves *kongkaak*[1] "the people." Although at one time it was comprised of six distinct bands (Fig. 2), the tribe has now lost its band organization. However, much of the late history of these now-defunct tribal units remains vivid in the minds of the Seri. The purpose of this paper is to present some of the salient features of these former bands, to discuss certain interrelations between them, and to recount the Seri version of the disintegration of the band system.[2]

Three published studies on the Seri should be mentioned.[3] Of these, the reports by Kroeber and by Griffen are the more reliable. All three investigators mention tribal divisions which Griffen rightly designates as bands.

BANDS

BAND I *xika ʔai kkoii* "they who live toward the true wind"

This group is commonly referred to in the literature as the Tepoca or Salinero. As shown on Fig. 1, they inhabited an area which extended from a point slightly north of Puerto Lobos to Punta Tepopa on the south. The territory extended inland, encompassing the general area delimited by the San Ignacio River.

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the vessel to Guaymas. With the aid of a group of Yaqui, some of these women were said to have been permitted to go to Hermosillo and eventually to return to their home on Tiburon. Others of their group are said to have remained near Guaymas. The women who returned to Tiburon reported that the San Esteban women and children were put aboard another ship which sailed southward.

BANDS I, III, AND IV

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As opposition from the Papago and government forces increased, the members of Band I were forced to seek refuge on Tiburon Island. The mainland members of Band III (subdivisions 11 and 12) were also forced, especially during the Encinas Wars, to flee to Tiburon. There the combined forces of Bands I, III, and IV sought to cope with the military expeditions sent out through the years to exterminate them. Tiburon Island is an adverse battlefield for the uninitiated; some expeditions were turned back due to lack of potable water or because of failure to make contact with the enemy in the mountainous terrain. Some expeditions did encounter the Seri, however, and many natives were either killed or captured.

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Through the years, then, these military encounters, along with smallpox and measles epidemics, were responsible for reducing the Seri tribe to a small remnant. The band and clan systems lost their functional relevance as the people continued to live together for mutual protection. Shortly after the turn of the century, the expeditions and raids had practically ceased.

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SIGNIFICANCE OF BANDS TODAY

With the dissolution of the band system, the rule of descent shifted from patrilineal to bilateral, and the rule of residence shifted from patrilocal to neolocal.

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Although the substance of the band system is no longer a reality, the concept of land ownership still remains. A young Seri of today may choose to be associated with either the i?iziiting of his father or that of his mother. He is said to inherit part ownership of the area. It is recalled by one informant that in former times ownership of a mountain was especially important. Sometimes ownership of a mountain was included as part payment for a bride. Thus a person might 'own' a mountain in a subdivision other than his own.

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A custom exists even today whereby a person names his dog after a mountain or other geographical point located in his subdivision. Although the person may re-use the name, each dog so named must be of the same sex as the first.

SERI BLUE

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ABSTRACT

The blue which the Seri Indians of Sonora, Mexico, use in face painting is not the mineral dumortierite, as previously believed, but is a prepared pigment. This paper is a description of the process in which three elements are combined to produce this pigment.

McGee and Kroeber reported the mineral dumortierite as the source of the blue pigment used in Seri face painting (McGee 1898: 165-6; Kroeber 1931: 27). Coolidge described two blues, one a mixture of gypsum and a boiled root, the other a blue stone found on Tiburon Island (Coolidge 1939: 200). Xavier mentioned dumortierite and commercial bluing. She also referred to a third blue obtained from a plant on Tiburon (Xavier 1946). Present investigation has shown that as far as the Seri know, the only blues they have ever used are *ika?óil* "to cause to be blue" (commercial bluing) and the highly prized *?antezj kóil* "blue clay" of their own manufacture.[1]

The components and the method of manufacture of *?antezj kóil* are said to have been taught to the women long ago by *?ant i?akimxoj* "they who tell the things about the earth." The actual color transformation is veiled in mystery to the Seri who say that if the process of making the clay is observed by any girl who has not passed the menarche, the blue will not appear. Its appearance is not attributed to shaman power, however.

?antezj kóil has been in less demand during the last few decades since commercial bluing has been readily available. Nevertheless, *?antezj kóil* is the blue preferred by those women who continue to adorn their faces in the traditional manner.

The three ingredients used in making the blue clay are the root bark of *xkoktz (Franseria dumosa)*, *iki kóizj* "to grind with" (a mixed clay in which montmorillonitic layers predominate), and *mokni óoxW* "excrement (sap) of *mókni (Guaiacum coulteri)*." The Seri say that the *iki kóizj* and the *mókni* are found only on Tiburon Island. The root bark of *tinkl (Franseria ambrosioides* Cav.) or of *xneejan stiktoj (Stegnospermum halimifolium)* can be used instead of *xkoktz*. *tinkl* gives a distinct aroma to the clay. The plants mentioned are fairly common along the Sonoran coast.*

*EDITOR'S NOTE: It is interesting to note that none of the ingredients is blue in its unaltered state.